

The Meaning of Freedom

Technocracy offers you a cause worth fighting for -- a new Declaration of Independence -- a new fight for freedom that makes all of the previous struggles for freedom seem like tempests in a teapot by comparison. This is a war against poverty, oppression and fear.

ONE of the ideals of the American people is the concept of freedom. It was for 'freedom' that we were supposed to have fought Mother England and shed the blood of colonial Americans. The history books, however, are a little vague about the exact nature of this freedom which prompted us to fight the Revolutionary War. They fail to emphasize, among other things, that there were a number of wealthy people in the colonies -- some prominent businessmen and landowners, others refugees from England where they had acquired the displeasure of the king -- who wanted freedom in the worst way. They wanted freedom from paying taxes to England and they wanted freedom from prosecution for their past indiscretions. So, they were able to promote a war for 'freedom.'

NOT CLEARLY DEFINED

But the common people were not sold on the idea, and it was almost impossible to persuade enough of them to stay under arms to keep the war going. The military history of the Revolutionary War reveals that the people did not have their hearts in the fight and their morale was very low. So, the wealthy colonists were finally forced into getting the French to come over and help fight the Germans, whom the British had hired to do their fighting, and in the end we won our freedom.

It has never been clearly stated just what that freedom was that we are supposed to have won, as contrasted to what the people had previous to that freedom. There was a change in the titles of the political administrators, it is true, but no noticeable change in the way of life. The freedom to chisel, or to toil and be chiseled, was still much the same, with most of the people getting the latter. Of course, if one didn't like what he had, and could escape his creditors, he could move westward and fight the Indians, and work and sweat to clear the trees from a small piece of ground, so he could be free to continue the struggle to survive.

Americans had another 'freedom,' which gave them a little excitement now and then, but no great satisfaction. This was the freedom of going to the polls every four years to vote for some dubious character to fill a political office. Their eternal hope was that they would elect a good president, who would really try to do something for them. But they have yet to put a man into that office who was not primarily interested in looking out for

the welfare of big business, and not for the common man. We say this unequivocally and make no exceptions.

For a while this vague concept of freedom was not questioned very much. People had to work too hard to gain a subsistence to have time to worry about whether they were free or not. Those who were contrary enough to ask about it were given a free invitation to go west, where they could fight it out by means of six guns with the other lovers of freedom.

But, eventually, the west got all settled up and there were no more free homesteads to interfere with the real estate business. Then, more and more people began to get interested in this freedom that was mentioned in the school books. But along came a series of drastic events to misdirect their attention. They got a world war, then a brief inflation, then a depression, then a boom, then a heck of a big depression, then another world war. By this time, we had an astute politician in office as president, and he figured it was about time to give the people an answer to their queries about freedom; especially, since the free enterprise propaganda wasn't fooling anybody. So, he went into a huddle with his brain trust and came up with a whole litter of freedoms-- well, anyway, four freedoms.

These were called freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. But naming these four freedoms did not change anything. We have always had freedom of speech, haven't we? It says so in the Bill of Rights. All we have to do is observe 'lese majesty' and not openly discuss controversial social topics. We have always had freedom of religion, likewise; in spite of the fact that certain cults have been chased across the Continent, others have been tarred and feathered by 'patriotic' organizations and still others have been put into jail for practicing their religion. If you don't believe that we have freedom of religion, look it up in the Constitution. This freedom from want is a little more tricky and harder to explain. How are you going to satisfy the homeless, the earless, the jobless or the penniless that they have freedom from want? The freedom from fear is in no better shape, with all this fear of inflation, fear of disemployment, fear of world war, fear of communism, fear of atom bombs, fear of abundance and fear of what's coming next.

GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Americans evidently do have more freedom of activity on the whole than do the people of the rest of the world. But this is not because we have a Bill, of Rights, nor because we have big business enterprise, nor because we go through the motions of electing political representatives. It is simply because we have more resources and degrade more energy

per capita. We are able to produce more; so, the people must be permitted more freedom of activity in order to use it up. For example, we did not build cross-country highways and manufacture more than thirty million automobiles and put a filling station on every other corner, and let the people get into these cars and travel all over the country, merely because we believed in freedom. Oh no, we did this because business had cars and gasoline and oil to sell, and the situation demanded that the people be turned loose to run all over the place. It was good for business.

Let us analyze the wants of the American people and see if we can find out what they want to be free from and for:

The American people want to be free, among other things, to believe whatever they want to -- that is, if it comes to them already wrapped up in a handy package so they won't have to figure out anything for themselves. The average American believes the same things that the people with whom he associates believe. We believe in a certain religion, for example, because our parents believed in it. We believe in a certain moral code because our neighbors believe in it. We believe in gift-giving at Christmas because others around us believe in it. And so on. Yes, we have freedom of belief -- about the same amount of freedom we have in choosing the color of our skins or the shapes of our noses.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT?

We also cherish the idea that we have freedom of thought. It is a nice thing to have, so far as the average American is concerned, provided he does not have to exercise it. Very few Americans like to think at all. They prefer to have their thinking done for them; and, when it is dished out to them, they accept it on faith, like they do a salad. They prefer to affiliate themselves with some minority group and accept the prepared thoughts of that group. So, Americans belong to organized churches, to businessmen's clubs and to political parties, because the thinking in these groups has already been done, and there is little strain on the individual's brain cells.

Those whose brains are a little more agile, and who do not take wholeheartedly to the prepared brain dope, prefer to do a little thinking on their own. Do these people gather the facts together and, with unprejudiced judgment, fit them together into a more comprehensive and positive picture of reality? Of course not, except for a few. They usually join a debating society or a discussion group. Here they can concentrate on one side of an idea, formulate prejudiced opinions concerning it, and come up with an entirely warped concept. Or they become so-called liberals and merely peck at an idea from all sides, but never arrive at any conclusion about it. Both of these are defeatist escapisms, but they constitute what passes for freedom of thought in America today.

Few, indeed, are the Americans who have the desire, the capacity or the integrity to think things out clearly for themselves on the basis of facts. Science is giving this sort of training to a few in limited fields. The majority of Americans simply prefer not to think at all. That is the type of freedom of thought that they want.

Freedom of thought and freedom of belief are rather tricky freedoms, unless we analyze them carefully. They have meaning only in so far as the individual is free to formulate beliefs and opinions of his own. Most of us acquire our basic beliefs and opinions from others; mostly, when we are too young to defend ourselves, or when we are under emotional strain or exaltation and are not able to think dispassionately. The only real freedom of belief and thinking which we could have would be freedom from indoctrination. This does not include the compulsion of facts which nature imposes upon us; for, the more facts we know, the more freedom of thought we have. Facts are the tools of thinking and enable us to adjust ourselves to reality. So, when we speak of freedom of thought, let us understand it to mean freedom to obtain facts to think from, and the removal of the shackles of indoctrinated beliefs and opinions.

There is another freedom that has always been the goal of man. But, for the great majority, it has always been elusive. This is economic freedom. Freedom to obtain the physical things of life in abundance has always been a dream, but never a reality, except, perhaps, for a very few in high positions of power. One of the obstacles to the realization of this freedom was the energy conversion factor. It so happens that everything we want in the way of goods and services requires the degradation of energy in its production. Up until this last century, the chief energy degraded in the process of production was human energy. This quantity of energy was so low, on a per capita basis, that people could not have more than a small fraction of what they desired. They could speak of general economic freedom, but it was just not theirs to have.

That picture is now changed due to the large-scale use of extraneous energy. That is, economic freedom is now in sight for the people of the North American Continent -- but not for the rest of the world. We have the potential capacity to provide the entire population of this Continent with all the goods and services which it could use. We do not have that freedom, in reality, largely because of our slavery to certain beliefs in regards to economics and government, under which most of the people are shackled -- some with the iron chains of poverty, some with the silver threads of superstition and some with the platinum handcuffs of 'success.'

ACHIEVING OUR GOAL

Americans are on the threshold of another freedom which, for us, goes hand in hand with the last. This is freedom from toil. In the other parts of the world, and in America before this century, economic freedom and freedom from toil were antagonistic. That is,

if people were to approach economic freedom, it meant that they had to sacrifice freedom from toil; for, the only way to produce more was to toil more, in modern America the two freedoms have become reconciled. For Americans to produce more, they must toil less. Technology, applied to the Area of North America, can provide us freedom from want and freedom from toil, both.

We also want freedom from sickness. In our desire for this freedom, we have appealed to the witch doctors, to the supernaturalists and to the herb doctors. But, significantly enough, the health ratio did not rise until science took a hand in the problem of health. Then, within a century on this Continent, the average length of life increased from 35 to over 60 years. And this was done in spite of the interference of political and business administration of the health service (which should more properly be called a health racket). We could have a much greater freedom from sickness and debility today, if it were not for business and political interference. Proper diet, proper periods of rest and activity and proper health examinations and treatment, along with the abolition of most contagious diseases and other causes of poor health, would measurably increase the standard of health and vitality and increase the average length of life over what it is now. This freedom to live a long, healthful life is now a physical probability for North Americans, but not under the Price System.

Freedom from fear is a more comprehensive freedom, and involves the consideration of a number of other freedoms. Fear of debt, of litigation, of poverty, of robbery and of swindle are all very real to us under the Price System. They are the fears that the Price System feeds upon. You have all noticed how careful the insurance men are, for example, to instill these fears into you before they get around to the real part of the shakedown. But, these are only the beginning. There are fears of sudden death -- from accident, from homicide and from war. There are fears of sickness, of disease and of crippling injuries. There are fears of being landed in jail or an asylum. There is the fear of ridicule in case you step outside of the narrow path of social regimentation prescribed by custom and tradition, instituted or otherwise. There is the fear of losing your position in society if you don't keep up the proper front. So, we go about like a pack of horsewhipped animals, afraid to act naturally, for fear that the whip will be cracked at us.

To achieve freedom from fear is a complex problem, but not too difficult for the most part. A scientifically managed society would abolish most of the causes of fear. Freedom from toil and economic worries would be achieved through the use of technology and the elimination of the Price System. Freedom from sudden death would be augmented by proper design of houses, roadways and other facilities of living. Freedom from the fear of sickness and disease would result from an improved health service. Freedom from the fear of jail would result when the causes of getting into jail were no longer present as incentives for misconduct -- of which money constitutes 95 percent. The

reduction of the causes of most worry and stress, along with careful mental examinations and psychiatric treatments, would keep most of the present patients out of mental institutions, which in that event would be high class sanitoriums and not the present 'bedlams' now known as insane asylums.

If you were guaranteed economic security for life, and you were not penalized for not keeping up a false front, and if you were not restricted by an arbitrary moral code, you could act more naturally and freely. You would not permit the neighbors to regiment you and you would be less concerned with trying to regiment them. If you then tried to impress people with a false front, you would be in the same position as a modern 'gentleman of the road' who enters a hobo jungle dressed up in a clean necktie and a starched collar. You would need the proper personality and a good sense of humor to get away with it; and you wouldn't fool anybody, nor impress them. The only social distinction you would receive would be that resulting from functional capability and achievement. You would be free to express yourself naturally; but you would not have the 'freedom' of artificially gaining recognition as a big shot, which is a dubious freedom anyway.

OTHER FREEDOMS

What are some of the other freedoms that you might want? Oh yes, you want freedom to get married and unmarried as the desire impels you. Both of these are difficult and hazardous under the Price System. If you want to get married now, and you are a man, you must first establish yourself economically; if you are a woman, you must find somebody to marry who is already economically established. Then, if your 'for-better-or-for-worse' alliance turns out to be worse than you took it for, you have all kinds of disagreeable difficulties in getting out of it. Science recognizes that the natural relationships between men and women are normal and desirable, and that there are often unforeseen causes of incompatibility. So, in a scientifically controlled society, both marriage and separation would be more simple. This would result in much greater freedom for the individuals. The superstition, the regimentation and the fear of social disgrace now surrounding sexual relationships would be abandoned. People could behave freely and naturally for a change.

Freedom from war is another thing that appeals to us. People have always lived under the threat of war and the possibility of the brutal death, terror and destruction which accompanies it. Americans have more occasion to fear war now than ever before. There is not much danger of aggression from without. The only 'enemies' that might initiate aggression against us have been made so militarily impotent as a result of fighting the recent war, on one side or the other, that they are no longer a real threat. The threat comes, rather, from our own economic, political and ecclesiastical reactionaries, who are conspiring to wage aggressive warfare for the purpose of preventing social change. The

Soviet Union constitutes, from the viewpoint of these reactionaries, a radical departure from the established 'christian' pattern of the status quo. The Soviet Union favors a different brand of superstitions from those favored by the so-called western world, and the pro-fascists do not like it. It is a challenge to their ego and to their ideological security. So, the latter seek to institute another inquisition, in the form of World War III, to eradicate such heresy.

The future peace of the world depends upon the United States and the Soviet Union. A military alliance of these two great areas could ensure the peace of the world, and permit unhampered technological development. The world could then operate in peace; not as one world, which is absurd, but as two worlds -- the world of large-scale, technological operations and the world of small-scale, hand-tool operations. Should the United States and the Soviet Union form a military alliance, no other nation or combination of nations would even contemplate war, even of a minor sort. The threat of war would be forever ended. We would have freedom to live in peace and plan for the future.

A FIGHT WORTH-WHILE

This Continent is faced with a social change that makes the mild program of the bolshevists seem like a proposal of the Daughters of the American Revolution by comparison. The pro-fascist reactionaries will no doubt fight this social change with all the cunning, treachery and force which they can command. But the physical trends and the desire of the general populace for freedom and security are against them. This new fight for freedom demands that no compromise be made with the upholders of the Price System. America must liquidate its pro-fascists at home before it can advance into a new social order. Technocracy offers the youth of America a fight worth-while -- a fight to win this Continent from the Price System, that they may live in peace and security. Technocracy warns that 'when the youth of America presents its ultimatum (for the New America), let no minority, racial, religious or economic, stand in its way; for, if one does, the youth of the Continent will concede nothing short of that minority's annihilation.'

The most profound declaration of freedom ever made on this Continent was made by the founders of our nation, as stated in the Declaration of Independence: ". . . That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government. . . ." The freedom to change our social controls to fit developing conditions is one of the most vital freedoms in a dynamic society. The Declaration of Independence is even more appropriate today than it was 170 years ago, but in a different sense.

Technocracy is the only Organization on the Continent that is seeking to institute a social system that is in conformity with the existing facts pertaining to North America,

and to provide for dynamic adjustments to future developments. It guarantees the maximum of social freedom, to replace the confining restrictions and limitations of the Price System. Not until business and politics are eliminated from the social operations of this Continent, can Americans be free to plan for the future and to move ahead. Among other things, the wasteful operations being carried out by Price System enterprise are depleting certain of our vital resources at such a rate that our present high energy civilization is greatly endangered. Notably, oil, copper, lead, zinc and high grade iron ore are rapidly approaching exhaustion. Only a scientifically designed conservation of natural resources will enable us to plan for an indefinite duration of a high order of civilization.

Technocracy offers you a freedom, both as individuals and as a society, that is worthy of the intelligence and the dignity of man -- one that can enable man to have pride in his superior intelligence. (It is now rumored that even the monkeys are making fun of our intelligence.) Technocracy offers you a cause worth fighting for-- a new Declaration of Independence -- a new fight for freedom that makes all previous struggles for freedom seem like tempests in a teapot by comparison. This is a war against poverty, oppression and fear. And until this new war is fought and won, Americans will not have a freedom worth fighting for.

Join Technocracy and fight like everything for a free America!

- Wilton Ivie

<https://archive.org/details/TheTechnocrat-November1946>